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General Assembly
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Official Records

84th plenary meeting
Friday, 17 December 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Morel (Seychelles), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 20 and 50 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(f) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Draft resolution (A/54/L.58)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/671)

The Acting President: We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/54/L.58.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/54/671.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/54/L.58, the following countries have become sponsors: Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Madagascar, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Samoa, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.58?

Draft resolution A/54/L.58 was adopted (resolution 54/189).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 50.

Agenda item 24 *(continued)*

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Draft resolution (A/54/L.47/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this item at its 72nd plenary meeting on 7 December 1999.

00-27742 (E)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/54/L.47/Rev.1.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): On behalf of the sponsors and as agreed during informal consultations on document A/54/L.47/Rev.1, I would like to make the following oral correction: the fourth preambular paragraph should follow the fifth preambular paragraph, in order to have a consistent chronological order of all relevant conventions mentioned in the text.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burundi, Colombia, Croatia, Romania and Ukraine.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/54/L.47/Rev.1, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 54/190).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Algeria, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Sai (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to make one correction: Algeria has withdrawn from the list of sponsors of this draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Secretariat takes note of that fact.

I call on the representative of Greece.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): On behalf of my Government, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to all Member States for the valuable support rendered to the resolution just adopted. Their constructive participation during informal consultations on the draft text made possible its adoption today by consensus for the first time since the introduction of this agenda item in 1973.

Cooperation between Member States, transparency of information and open exchanges of views between parties concerned are indeed instrumental in achieving mutually acceptable solutions to the issue of return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin.

I would like once more to express
the sponsors of this resolution and ask M
pursue further their efforts, especiall
relevant committees of the United Natio
Scientific and Cultural Organization, t
resolution's implementation.

The Acting President: May I take
wish of the Assembly to conclude its c
agenda item 24?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 35 *(continued)*

Assistance in mine action

Draft resolution (A/54/L.71)

The Acting President: Members wil
General Assembly held a debate on this i
plenary meeting, on 19 November 1999.

I now give the floor to the representa
to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.71.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have th
introduce, on behalf of the European Uni
other sponsors, the draft resolution on assi
action, contained in document A/54/L.
publication of this draft resolution, entitle
in mine action", the following countries
sponsors: Angola, Colombia, Malta, Moza
Leone, South Africa and Thailand.

In order to make the text consistent w
finalized in negotiations and submitted to t
let me make the following oral corrections

First, in the first preambular paragrap
the resolutions should be cited. After "
1997", the words "on assistance in mi
should be added; and also after "17 Nov
the words "on assistance in mine actio
added.

Secondly, in the sixth line of the ten
paragraph, the word "and" should the ad
comma. In the last line, the word "for" sh
after the word "and".

Thirdly, in operative paragraph 2, line 4, the word "and" should be added after the comma, and the word "those" should be replaced by "these".

Fourthly, at the end of operative paragraph 9, the following words should be added: "in annex II to his report on this agenda item in 1998".

Fifthly, in operative paragraph 19, line 4, the words "progress made" should be deleted.

The agenda item "Assistance in mine action" puts before us an area of tremendous humanitarian suffering. Almost one third of the world's nations are, to some extent, contaminated by millions of anti-personnel landmines and pieces of unexploded ordnance. The purpose of this draft resolution is to help reduce the number of mine victims by enhancing international cooperation in humanitarian mine action. It is aimed at supporting and making easier the work of the United Nations and all other actors involved in mine action in the field, be it in mine clearance, victim assistance, mine awareness or other mine action activities. The draft resolution again emphasizes the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine action activities, as well as the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system. It encourages the Secretary-General to further develop a comprehensive mine action strategy and emphasizes the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action.

There have been important developments in the field of mine action in 1999, many of which are reflected in the draft resolution. The draft notes the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention in May 1999, in Maputo, at which measures were taken, among other things, to provide assistance for mine clearance, rehabilitation, the social and economic reintegration of mine victims and mine-awareness programmes.

The draft resolution welcomes the mine action coordination centres already established under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the creation of international trust funds for mine clearance and mine assistance. It further welcomes the initiation of the revision of international mine-clearance standards and the development of guidelines for the use of mine-detection dogs and mechanical mine-clearance equipment. Much emphasis is placed in the draft resolution on victim assistance, as well as on the need for age- and gender-appropriate mine-awareness programmes and child-related rehabilitation.

The negotiations on this draft resolution were lengthy, and we hope that the result will lead to further enhancement of international cooperation in the field of mine action. I would like to express our gratitude to all the delegations that gave their support during the negotiations and our hope that this important draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I would like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/54/L.71 Senegal has become a sponsor.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally corrected.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/54/L.71, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/191).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Finland speaking on a point of order.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): There seems to be some confusion regarding the sponsors of resolution 54/191, which has just been adopted.

May I inform the Assembly that Andorra had also signed on as a sponsor on time. Andorra should therefore be added as a sponsor of this resolution.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 62

Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The Acting President: It is my understanding that, after the necessary consultations, consideration of this item may be deferred to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and

to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 62.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/54/L.70)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/54/L.72/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Cameroon to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Some days ago I drew the attention of the international community to the need for emergency assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to Djibouti and to Somalia. Today I have the honour to call for continued assistance to the Sudan. In that connection, I wish on behalf of the Group of African States to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan", under agenda item 20 (b).

Above and beyond its humanitarian assistance to the Sudan through Operation Lifeline Sudan, we urge the international community to continue its much-appreciated active participation in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Sudan. The draft resolution has been the subject of intensive consultations and has won the agreement of the donor community, represented by the European Union, by China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Japan, Norway and the United States, and by the International Committee of the Red Cross. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to extend to them and to all other participants in the consultations our thanks for their positive contribution and for their greatly appreciated assistance to the Sudan.

The draft resolution is very similar to resolution 53/1 O of 17 December 1998; in a sense, it is an updated and extended version of that resolution. It expresses the Assembly's appreciation to the donor community, United Nations agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations for their multifaceted contributions, and acknowledges with appreciation the cooperation by the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations in getting supplies to affected areas.

It stresses the need for Operation Lifeline Sudan to be operated and managed effectively with a view to ensuring its transparency, with the full involvement and cooperation of the Government of the Sudan, and in adherence to the principles of neutrality and impartiality and within the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan.

It calls upon all donors and upon the international community at large to increase their multifaceted assistance, because of the Sudan's enormous needs in the areas of health care, social and communication infrastructures, in fighting epidemics, and in terms of support for programmes for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and for the reintegration of populations.

It stresses the imperative of ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the need for all parties to continue to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations in order fully to demonstrate the international community's solidarity with the people of Sudan.

Finally, it expresses the wish to see the humanitarian tragedy of the Sudanese people end as soon as possible. It therefore calls for an early resolution to the conflict in the Sudan and commends the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the initiative of Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in this connection.

That is the basic structure of the draft resolution now before the General Assembly. As I said earlier, there have been intensive consultations on this draft resolution, with the active participation of the donor community.

It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which would have a positive impact on the conduct of international humanitarian operations in the Sudan and on the efforts of all parties to settle the conflict swiftly and peacefully. Above all, however, United Nations personnel in the Sudan would be encouraged by this support from the international community.

The Acting President: I wish to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.70: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

India has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.70, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", as orally revised in the course of the 80th plenary meeting.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): As members are aware, paragraph 14 of draft resolution A/54/L.70 reads as follows:

> "Recognizes the need to strengthen the Office of United Nations Security Coordinator and the need for a full time Security Coordinator to enable the Office to enhance its capacity in the discharge of its duties, in consultation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and appropriate agencies within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee".

That paragraph, as it stands, does not give rise to programme budget implications at this stage. The Secretary-General will review the United Nations security arrangements and will report to the General Assembly as appropriate.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.70, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/54/L.70, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/192).

The Acting President: Under sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, the General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/54/L.72/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 54/96 J).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Savage (United States of America): Today, the United States joined consensus on the humanitarian assistance resolution on Sudan.

We joined consensus despite the resolution's serious shortcomings and inaccuracies. While we agree with the importance of supporting a robust, United Nations-led humanitarian effort in the Sudan, we regret that this year's resolution did not accurately reflect the true situation facing both the victims of war and the providers of life-saving relief.

Since 1983, the civil war in the Sudan is estimated to have caused the deaths of some 2 million persons and the displacement of 4 million more. There are, in addition, some 400,000 persons languishing in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. This year's humanitarian resolution does not even begin to describe the situation facing the southern Sudanese. The resolution does not describe the Government's periodic imposition of relief-flight bans to areas affected by large-scale population displacements. In the past three months, the oil fields of western Upper Nile, in particular, have been subject to ethnic cleansing, leaving thousands displaced. At the same time, flight bans by the Government on United Nations operations have denied critical relief to the thousands who have lost their homes. It is for this reason that we support humanitarian relief operations outside the United Nations umbrella.

The resolution also fails to describe the Government of Sudan's continued aerial bombardment of civilian population centres and humanitarian relief operations, including the bombing of clearly marked hospitals and schools. Such attacks transgress international humanitarian law. The resolution does not mention the horrible practice of slavery, supported by Government-funded militias, that continues along the border areas between North and South Sudan, as described by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for human rights in

the Sudan. While we recognize that opposition forces have also been accused of diverting relief supplies and impeding the efforts of humanitarian workers, the main impediment to effective relief operations has been the Sudanese Government.

The United States is committed to a single, unified peace process under the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. The United States firmly supports the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan in its mission to alleviate suffering in the Sudan. The United States has consistently been the largest donor to the Sudanese relief effort. In 1999, the United States committed over $95 million to assistance programmes in the Sudan in both Government- and rebel-controlled areas. We have contributed nearly $1 billion in relief to the Sudan since the establishment of Operation Lifeline Sudan in 1989.

Despite multiple peace initiatives over the years, it appears that we are still far from a lasting and just peace in the Sudan. Although humanitarian conditions and food security appear to be improving in many areas, the situation remains vulnerable. With the continual cycle of war, drought and famine ever present in the Sudan, the international community must stay vigilant. This is not the time for the international community to reduce its support for assistance programmes in the Sudan, nor is it the time for us to lessen our resolve to end this terrible war.

Mr. Von Kaufmann (Canada): Canada joined consensus on resolution 54/96 J on emergency assistance to the Sudan. We did so to show Canada's continuing support for humanitarian assistance for the people of the Sudan.

However, we continue to have reservations about some of the language contained in the text and its potential effects on a coordinated international effort to effectively deliver humanitarian assistance to all affected populations in the Sudan. Unfortunately, not all of these concerns were taken into account. This has resulted in a resolution that contains unbalanced elements.

Despite an ongoing peace process, violations of humanitarian and human rights law continue to be perpetrated by both sides to this conflict, with especially negative effects on the civilian population. To date, the United Nations has noted that nearly 2 million people have been killed since 1983 and that in excess of 4 million remain internally displaced. We therefore call on all parties to respect their obligations under international law. Moreover, as we have noted previously, the humanitarian situation in the Sudan has not sufficiently changed to merit the decision to biennialize this resolution, a move which we oppose.

Canada vigorously supports the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process, including the 1994 Declaration of Principles. Both the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have accepted the Declaration of Principles as the basis for negotiations. Canada commends the decisions taken in July 1999 by the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM to recommit themselves to the IGAD peace process, including their support for the establishment of a talk secretariat and the appointment of a special envoy to facilitate the peace process and allow continuous negotiation between the parties.

Canada urges the parties to establish a general and comprehensive ceasefire with an effective monitoring mechanism as part of the negotiated solution to the conflict and in accordance with the Declaration of Principles. In the interim, we welcome the recent decision by the Government of the Sudan to extend for a further period of three months the ceasefire for all the areas of military operation and the announcement by the SPLM to extend the humanitarian ceasefire within the same period for Bahr al Ghazal and parts of the Upper Nile. Canada welcomes the signing by the Government of the Sudan of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and encourages its early ratification.

We continue to be concerned by the difficulty of ensuring full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian workers to all affected populations. Canada deplores the killing of humanitarian workers in the Sudan earlier this year, which underlines the need to ensure the protection of United Nations and other international and national personnel. The Government of Canada also emphasizes the importance of ensuring humanitarian access and, in this context, acknowledges the decision taken by the Government of the Sudan to permit United Nations access to the Nuba Mountains. This must be accompanied by ongoing humanitarian access to the Nuba people. Furthermore, Canada urges all parties to refrain from imposing restrictive measures, including flight bans, which hinder the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide needed assistance.

We continue to be concerned by references in the resolution that interfere with the management of Operation Lifeline Sudan and with independent humanitarian assistance activities that are not part of the operation. As Operation Lifeline Sudan constitutes the basic framework for assistance to the Sudan, it is therefore paramount that all parties in the Sudan operate in accordance with the 1994 tripartite Agreement and that the principles and guidelines of Operation Lifeline Sudan, as well as the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182, are duly respected by all to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the operation.

As in the past, Canada will continue to fully support the humanitarian work of Operation Lifeline Sudan to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations and to support the IGAD secretariat in the peace process.

Recognizing that there can be no military solution to Sudan's problems, Canada encourages a negotiated and just resolution to the civil conflict as the only sustainable means of bringing peace, security and well-being to the Sudanese people.

Mr. Rahmtalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Sudan has requested the floor in order to express its gratitude to all our partners from the donor community that agreed to support this resolution by consensus on the basis of its humanitarian nature. We thank them and appreciate their cooperation in achieving consensus on the resolution just adopted.

I do not wish to speak at length, but let me state that the accusations we have heard today have been made previously in different contexts and in other forums, and were answered then, and that they were motivated by political considerations. We do not wish to consider these political motives in detail.

The Government of Sudan is a party to Operation Lifeline, and, as is well known, to the tripartite Agreement between the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the rebel movement. That operation is considered to be a model one and has never before been undertaken by any Government. This is the first time that the Government of the Sudan has agreed that humanitarian relief assistance would be provided to the rebel movement that is taking up arms against the Government. Violations committed by that rebel movement in the southern Sudan are described in great detail in the report of the Secretary-General submitted under this item.

I should like to urge those representatives who spoke in explanation of vote today to re-read the report of the Secretary-General, which outlines in detail the breaches committed by the rebel movement in Sudan. That is all I have to say at this point.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 48

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/625)

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/54/629)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.36)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/665)

The Acting President: The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/54/L.36 is contained in document A/54/665.

I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Lucia to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.36.

Mr. Hunte (Saint Lucia): In my capacity as current Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of December, I have the honour to submit to the General Assembly, on behalf of the Group, the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.36, relative to the creation of an international civilian mission for support in Haiti in the framework of agenda item 48, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

Allow me therefore in this regard to stress to this body that in addition to the 33 members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the following countries have also sponsored the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The International Civilian Mission, deployed in Haiti since February 1993 by decision of the General Assembly in the context of the military coup of 1991 and its brutal and systematic violations of human rights, will soon reach the termination of its mandate on 31 December 1999. With the evolving responsibilities brought about by the changing realities of the situation on the ground, it has been widely acknowledged that the International Civilian Mission has decisively contributed to a qualitative change in the human rights situation, to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and to the professionalization of the security forces in Haiti.

In spite of the remarkable progress achieved by the Haitian national institutions in the field of human rights, there is still considerable need for continued international support in that regard, particularly as concerns the shortcomings and weaknesses of the judicial system and their negative impact on a national police that is not sufficiently equipped in techniques and resources and which has not yet reached institutional maturity. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Executive Director, Colin Granderson, and his staff for their commitment in the accomplishment of the Mission's mandate over that long period of time.

The United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) to assist the Haitian Government in the professionalization of the Haitian National Police had its mandate renewed by Security Council resolution 1212 (1998) of 25 November 1998. This mandate was to have expired 30 November 1999, but was renewed until 15 March 2000 by Security Council resolution 1277 (1999). It has also been recognized that since the creation of the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti the Haitian National Police has made significant progress in the fulfilment of its responsibilities, in spite of the shortcomings mentioned earlier.

The President of Haiti, Mr. René Préval, in his letter to the Secretary-General of 8 November 1999, praises the valuable role played by the United Nations in Haiti and recognizes the relevance of an institutional support mission, which, he points out, could contribute to

> "the democratization process and assist the Government of Haiti in strengthening the judiciary and professionalizing the Haitian National Police". *(A/54/629, appendix)*

In his report to the General Assembly, document A/54/625 of 22 November 1999, and his report to the Security Council, document S/1999/1184 of 18 November 1999, the Secretary-General stated that, in order to consolidate the achievements of the various United Nations missions in Haiti, a continued presence of the international community was desirable. Having consulted with the Haitian authorities and sent a needs assessment, the Secretary-General observed that the General Assembly might wish to consider the establishment of a mission to consolidate the gains achieved by the Haitians with the support of the International Civilian Mission and the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti.

Based on President Préval's letter and the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the country sponsors call on the Assembly to consider favourably this draft resolution, which establishes the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti.

We recognize that economic rehabilitation and reconstruction constitute the major tasks facing the people and the Government of Haiti and that significant international assistance is therefore indispensable for sustainable development. These have all along been the concerns addressed by the Economic and Social Council, as is reflected in its resolution 1999/11 of 27 July 1999.

Once again, the draft resolution before us is further proof of the commitment of the international community to continue its assistance to Haiti.

Finally, the sponsors wish to express their gratitude to the Secretary-General and other officers of the United Nations for their initiative and dedication in this matter.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): For some time now the people of Haiti have been involved in a battle to improve respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthen Haiti's democratic institutions. Today we are pleased by how far we have come and by the significant and important results that have been achieved, primarily thanks to the support of the international community. At the same time, we cannot forget or underestimate how precarious are our achievements.

The partnership between the people of Haiti and the international community in the areas of democracy and human rights has undergone various transformations in response to the national situation and external constraints. Today this partnership is entering a crucial phase. The International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH —

which was deployed in February 1993 as a cooperative effort of the United Nations and the Organization of American States — will soon reach the end of its mandate, on 31 December 1999, in accordance with resolution 53/95 of 8 December 1998.

On this occasion I would like to extend to the Executive Director of MICIVIH, Mr. Colin Granderson, and to his colleagues the thanks of the Haitian people for their valuable work to improve respect for human rights and to strengthen institutions such as the police force, the judiciary, the prison system and the Office of the Ombudsman.

On the other hand, less than a month ago the Security Council decided to extend until 15 March 2000 the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), the mandate of which had been set to expire on 30 November 1999. The Council took this action so as to ensure a gradual transition to the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti. MIPONUH worked in close coordination with MICIVIH in professionalizing the Haitian National Police and can take pride in having fulfilled the task entrusted to it by the Security Council.

With these two deadlines — 31 December 1999 and 15 March 2000 — rapidly approaching, all those involved in the struggle of the Haitian people to promote democracy and human rights are particularly worried about how to establish reliable mechanisms to consolidate the democratic advances made, under the difficult conditions resulting from the scale of the problems affecting the well-being of the people and seriously limiting development.

The current situation strongly obliges us to strengthen the partnership of the international community and Haiti. Bearing in mind that "development is another name for peace", we believe that — for countries such as ours that are emerging from crises — the international community's new approach to assistance must take into account not only justice and human rights, but also economic and social development.

In this connection, allow me to recall here that Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11, which was adopted at the Council's 1999 substantive session in response to a request from the Security Council, calls for the preparation of a long-term assistance programme for Haiti. My country hopes that the various recommendations contained in that resolution will soon be acted upon.

Because of all the aforementioned concerns — namely, filling the vacuum that will be left by MIPONUH and MICIVIH as regards efforts to consolidate democracy in Haiti, to improve the human rights situation and subsequently to create a framework that will encourage the implementation of the provisions of the Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11 — the President of the Republic of Haiti, Mr. René Préval, in his 8 November 1999 letter to the Secretary-General, expresses the hope that an institutional support mission can be established, a mission whose personnel would be neither uniformed nor armed and whose objective would be to support the democratization process in Haiti. This proposal was reflected in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, document S/1999/1184 of 18 November 1999.

Draft resolution A/54/L.36, establishing the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), now before the Assembly, responds to all these concerns, and we ask the Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

Before concluding, allow me to thank the Member States that have sponsored this draft resolution.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): During the past year we have witnessed some encouraging developments in the process of bringing Haiti back onto the road to democracy. A new Government has been appointed, a Provisional Electoral Council has been established, and preparations for elections have started. But there have also been setbacks. The high level of violence continues unabated. The increase in political violence is of particular concern in a country that is trying to lay the foundation for a sound and lasting democracy.

We are pleased to note that the dates for the election of a new parliament have been announced, and we take it that there will be no further delay. We expect these elections to be held in accordance with international requirements, and we expect that the Haitian people will be encouraged to exercise their right to vote. To ensure broad participation, voters must be convinced that if they exercise their voting rights the result will constitute an important step in the development of a democratic and stable Government. As the Secretary-General states in his report, elections

> "may not result in political normality if the underlying critical issues are not addressed, in particular the lack of a broad consensus on social

and economic development policies and on the exercise of political power". (*A/54/625, para. 64*)

Security is likely to become a growing problem in the period leading up to elections unless the appropriate bodies immediately take responsibility for effective action to improve the situation. The fledgling Haitian police force will be expected to do its best to contain unrest and reduce tension, but the main responsibility for easing the tension rests firmly in the hands of Haiti's political leaders.

The Norwegian Government has been one of the contributors to a consultation process aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Haitian leadership and of Haitian State institutions to deal with the development challenges facing the country. So far, five meetings have been held as part of the consultation process, the two most recent in Haiti itself. Our position is that the process should result in the creation of a broad coalition which will conduct discussions on Haiti's political, economic and social future. A key step in making this feasible will be to build a consistent and thorough understanding of the very complex and dismal reality that faces Haiti, and of its development. To that end, the Norwegian Government will be financing a survey by the United Nations Development Programme of living conditions to provide a foundation for planning and for political discussions regarding present and future challenges in Haiti.

As we see it, the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) have made vital contributions to the moderate but significant progress I mentioned earlier. We believe it is of the utmost importance that the international community assist in setting up a mechanism within the United Nations for the continuation of their work, even though the ultimate responsibility for strengthening the police force lies with the Government of Haiti.

Norway welcomes the establishment of the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti to consolidate the results achieved by previous missions. We fully agree with the timetable and the mandate proposed in the draft resolution (A/54/L.36) on this agenda item, of which Norway is a sponsor.

Norway gives its full support to the United Nations in its involvement and considers the maintenance of a United Nations presence in Haiti to be of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, the main responsibility for consolidating democracy and ensuring respect for human rights in Haiti remains with the people and the Government of Haiti. The international community must, however, support the Haitians in their efforts to build a democratic society and to achieve economic and social development. Norway will shoulder its responsibility to ensure a continued international commitment to Haiti.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): In his letter to the Secretary-General of 8 November 1999, the President of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. René Préval, clearly expressed his wish that an institutional support mission should be undertaken to support the democratization process in Haiti, as well as to help the Government to strengthen the judicial system and put in place a more professional national police force.

In his reports to the General Assembly on democracy and human rights in Haiti, and in his reports to the Security Council on the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), the Secretary-General has stressed the need to continue helping the Haitian people achieve their objectives of development and democracy once the mandates of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and of MIPONUH have ended.

The Friends of Haiti, in close consultation with the Secretariat and with Haiti, have spent weeks — even months — carefully preparing draft resolution A/54/L.36 on the creation of an International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH), which is before the Assembly for its consideration.

The draft resolution would create the mission requested by President Préval and would take into account the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The new mission was designed very carefully to respond to the specific needs associated with the transition from a peacekeeping mission to a civilian mission.

A parallel resolution, Security Council resolution 1277 (1999), was adopted by the Security Council on 30 November 1999, to extend the mandate of MIPONUH until 15 March 2000 in order to ensure a gradual transition to MICAH. This transition period from MIPONUH to MICAH seemed essential in order to prepare for the new mission.

Logically, the draft resolution on MICAH should have been considered by the General Assembly before the end of MIPONUH's mandate and at the same time as the Security Council resolution. It is regrettable that after such intense preparations were made and such complex

political and financial issues were resolved, it took more than two weeks for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to consider this item, which delayed its consideration in the General Assembly. This caused us to lose two precious transitional weeks that we could have spent preparing for MICAH, two weeks for which we are accountable to the Haitians.

Canada is pleased to be a sponsor of the draft resolution that would create MICAH and is prepared to make a tangible contribution to the new mission. MICAH is a tailor-made solution, prepared by the Friends of Haiti, the Secretariat and the Haitians to adapt international assistance so that it responds appropriately to the need to consolidate the progress achieved by MICIVIH and MIPONUH.

MICAH will make it possible to complete the transition, which is already under way, from a military peacekeeping presence to a civilian police presence and eventually towards a long-term cooperation programme, as mentioned a moment ago by the representative of Haiti. The draft resolution on MICAH echoes the recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/11 of 27 July 1999. The Economic and Social Council asked that the Secretary-General take the necessary steps, in agreement with the Government of Haiti, to develop a long-term strategy and programme of support for Haiti.

The draft resolution on MICAH clearly states that the responsibility for rebuilding Haiti, bringing about national reconciliation and maintaining a safe, stable political environment lies chiefly with the people and the Government of Haiti. MICAH is first and foremost a tool that the international community is offering to the Haitians so that they can tackle the many challenges facing them as they strive to achieve these objectives.

The first challenge will be to hold credible legislative and local elections in order to re-establish Parliament, a pillar of democracy. We urge the Haitians once again to continue working to convene these elections within the time-frame set out in the electoral calendar.

The draft resolution on MICAH takes into account the Haitian reality that presidential elections will be held at the end of the year 2000 and extends the Mission's mandate to the eve of the President Elect's inauguration so that MICAH can provide Haiti with the best possible support during a period so crucial to the country's democracy.

MICAH will provide Haiti with broader, better-targeted and better-coordinated support. The Mission will comprise approximately 100 international experts working as technical advisers to strengthen Haiti's institutions and to assist in its democratization through activities on three fronts: the legal system, the police and human rights. The Mission will be headed by a representative of the Secretary-General, who, in addition to directing the United Nations activities in Haiti, will ensure the transparency and coordination of the Mission's activities by maintaining a follow-up dialogue with the principal Haitian actors and with donors.

MICAH is a new type of mission. Its success will depend largely on its preparedness. It is therefore important that work begin as soon as the General Assembly adopts the resolution creating it today. MIPONUH is being maintained to facilitate the transition, not to delay it. In particular, we feel that the choice of experts comprising the new Mission will be a key to its success. All due care and creativity must be shown in recruiting them.

It will also take time to harmonize MICAH's activities with the many multilateral and bilateral programmes in place, such as the Canadian programmes offering police and legal support. But above all, we will need to ensure that MICAH does not represent an ad hoc intervention; rather, it must constitute a step on the path that Haiti has chosen, an instrument that will consolidate past gains and put in place the necessary elements for long-term support in Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

The time has therefore come to begin pondering the steps to be taken following MICAH. Canada is urging the Secretary-General to ensure that the process for developing a long-term strategy for Haiti takes place in consultation with all the actors at both the multilateral level — the World Bank and other international financial institutions — and the bilateral level. Canada is aware of the importance of this process and we will be paying special attention to the outcome of these efforts.

Finally, the creation of MICAH could mark the end of seven years of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) in the context of MICIVIH. Canada would like to extend its sincere thanks and express its admiration for the perseverance and courage shown by members of MICIVIH, in particular by its Executive Director,

Ambassador Colin Granderson. MICIVIH has laid a solid foundation for MICAH and its strong nature makes it an example to be followed. We hope that the Organization of American States will continue in the future to work actively in its areas of expertise in Haiti.

Mr. Molina Cuadra (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We make this statement on behalf of the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic. Our delegations express their thanks and gratitude for the important and valuable information provided on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti by the Secretary-General in his note of 20 September, contained in document A/54/366. Similarly, we highlight the information provided in the letter of 22 November 1999 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly on the same item, contained in document A/54/629.

Addressing issues of democracy and human rights is always an important challenge from which we cannot and must not shy away. Countries such as ours throughout our region have been greatly affected in this regard, as has the development of our political, social and economic lives. Undoubtedly, this issue can be applied and considered universally.

On the specific case of the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, we wish to express our satisfaction in noting that, according to the Secretary-General's documents, despite the difficulties of the situation in Haiti, some important achievements have been made in areas that fall under the broad heading of democracy and human rights. However, the challenges remain great to local authorities in Haiti, on the one hand, and to the international community on the other in the contexts of mechanisms of cooperation and assistance and of the United Nations system.

The international community, and Latin America in particular, have witnessed the difficult situation affecting the Haitian people in their attempts to overcome their serious political, social and economic problems. We also know from our own experience that this transition is not easy and that achievements made, however small they may appear, are very valuable and significant — more so still when they lay the foundations for new successes in the near future.

The positive achievements in the area of democracy and human rights, as well as in such fields as the rights of women — including the November 1997 session in Port-au-Prince of the International Tribunal for the Eliminatio Violence against Haitian Women — have borne frui recent years.

Achievements made in some areas with respec public freedom and, in general, a certain positive tr in the political situation should be consolidated as basis for the Haitian people's ongoing progress improving their overall living standards. However must be recognized that continued international assista towards full success in this difficult task is essential if Haitian people are to greet the new millennium renewed hope for building peace and tolerance and u their best efforts to overcome the economic problems still face their nation.

We wish to express our sincere hope that forthcoming general elections will be another fa assisting Haiti's efforts to consolidate the process democratization in this transitional period strengthening the situation of human rights. We appe the international community to make the forthcon elections a real and irreversible opportunity to impr the situation in Haiti and, in particular, to establish a United Nations assistance mission, bearing in mind fact that the United Nations presence in Haiti remai very positive factor for overall developments.

In conclusion, our delegations wish to express hope that the process of democratization in Haiti — full success of which depends primarily on coopera among all parties and on the various sectors of Ha society — will mark an irreversible step tow improved well-being for the citizens of Haiti, children, their young people and all those who dese better life and wish to preserve and strengthen it.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour to spea behalf of the European Union. The Central and Ea European countries associated with the Euro Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Est Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slov Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Associ country member of the European Economic Area Ice align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks the Secretary-Ge for his excellent and detailed report on Haiti. European Union remains deeply concerned abou political and institutional crises that Haiti has been fa since June 1997. The democratic transition proce

Haiti has, unfortunately, not yet come to a point where the international community could cease its presence there.

The European Union believes that a lasting solution to the crises will be possible only through elections conducted in a free, honest and open atmosphere. We therefore note with satisfaction that parliamentary elections will be held in March and April of next year. The importance of these elections cannot be overestimated, and it is therefore imperative that everything possible be done to ensure that they are organized in a democratic, transparent and orderly manner and that all possible efforts be made to guarantee the highest possible participation.

The maintenance of security during and after the elections is of major importance. We believe that preparing for this important task should be a key priority for the Haitian National Police. It is also essential that all of Haiti's political actors commit themselves to ensuring that the forthcoming electoral process will lead to a reinforcement of Haiti's institutions, which will in turn form the basis for its long-term sustainable development.

The European Union shares the view of the Secretary-General that it is the overriding responsibility of Haiti's political leaders to involve themselves with a constructive dialogue and to become real partners in their country's future.

The European Union supports fully all United Nations actions towards the electoral process and calls on all States to contribute, according to their ability, to these efforts.

Haiti has for several years been aided on its path to democracy by consecutive United Nations and international operations, the latest being the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH). The European Union wishes to express its appreciation to these Missions and their members for the indispensable role they have played and for the valuable work they have done.

The mandates of these operations will soon expire, but their tasks are not yet completed. Much remains to be done. Political instability and institutional frailty prevail. The security situation is deteriorating. There is an upsurge of crime and political violence. The institutional consolidation of the new police force has been hampered by lack of resources and equipment, organizational weaknesses and efforts to gain political control of the force. Criminal activity and drug trafficking within its ranks are further weakening the effectiveness of the reform.

It is thus crucial that a United Nations presence is maintained in Haiti. The responsibility for consolidating democracy and ensuring respect for human rights lies primarily with the Government of Haiti, but the European Union is ready, together with the international community, to help it in this task.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union warmly welcomes the draft resolution under discussion, prepared by the Group of Friends of Haiti. The European Union also welcomes the innovative work done earlier this year by the Economic and Social Council and the ad hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. Their recommendations, contained in the Secretary-General's report, form the basis for a viable transition for a new mission in Haiti, after the end of MIPONUH and MICIVIH.

The new Mission — the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) — will continue to consolidate the results already achieved, while allowing a coordinated approach to improving the climate of respect for democracy, good governance and human rights in an integrated manner, and strengthening civil society. It is essential that the Mission's activities be complementary to other multilateral and bilateral programmes.

The European Union fully supports the focus of the new Mission, which has three main pillars: justice, human rights and police. We especially appreciate the new focus on justice issues. A properly functioning judicial system, an organizationally sound police force and full respect for human rights are cornerstones of a democratic society. These objectives are key in a volatile political situation and a foundation for a more long-term approach.

The European Union reaffirms the principle that special political missions should be financed primarily from the regular budget and that MICAH, taking into account its technical cooperation element, cannot be viewed in any case as a precedent. In this context, the European Union welcomes the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and fully endorses the request of the Fifth Committee to the Secretary-General to report to the

General Assembly for further action should the extra-budgetary resources for the Mission become insufficient. The European Union also calls upon Member States that have promised to do so to provide their voluntary contributions to MICAH as soon as possible and to ensure that they are used in a spirit of neutrality and multilateralism.

Today the European Union is the largest donor in Haiti. The European Union supports Haiti in all major sectors. For instance, a substantive new project in the justice sector is being prepared. The European Union reiterates its willingness to support the electoral process, subject to assurances by the Haitian Government to respect the calendar set for the elections. We continue to be committed to assisting in all key areas necessary for helping Haiti in its efforts to become a democratic, safe and peaceful country.

Mrs. Ramírez (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution whose adoption we are endorsing represents the final stage of an undertaking that is almost unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. The creation of the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) is one of the final links in the process of coordinating the various stages of the settlement of a conflict. The maintenance of peace, which was the goal of the mandate of the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and of the other missions that preceded it, will be followed by a stage in which the focus is the consolidation of peace, governmental institutions and a democratic system. All of the main bodies involved in this process have carried out their tasks to the fullest.

Indeed, when the Security Council adopted resolution 1212 (1998), a process of coordination began among the main bodies of this Organization. Based on Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/11, the group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Haiti, in consultation with the Secretariat and the Haitian Government, prepared the draft resolution that we are considering, which will establish the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) and which is co-sponsored by the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

As a result of this process and of the joint work of MIPONUH and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) — Missions that will be succeeded by MICAH — the Haitian institutions have been strengthened. In particular, the Haitian National Police has achieved a level of professionalism, as is reflected in paragraph 60 of the Secretary-General's report on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, document A/54/625, which states,

> "Accountability has become a vital aspect of the new institutional ethos of the police."

However, the same report warns that this institution is not yet mature as an institution and lacks self-confidence. Thus, *inter alia*, it would be advisable for the United Nations presence in Haiti to continue. This was recognized both by President René Préval in his letter dated 8 November 1999, in which he requested the deployment of this Mission, and in the report of the Secretary-General.

Since the beginning of the United Nations presence in Haiti, Argentina has manifested its commitment to maintaining the democratic institutions in Haiti by providing resources and military and police personnel, and we hope to continue doing so in the context of this new Mission that we are establishing. For the time being this effort is continuing through the provision of support for the special police unit of MIPONUH, whose mandate was extended, for technical reasons, until 15 March 2000 by Security Council resolution 1277 (1999).

The deployment of this Mission is made possible primarily thanks to the responsibility with which the Haitian authorities have acted. President René Préval has shown himself to be capable of dealing with the historical circumstances now facing his country.

We also express our gratitude to all the members of the main bodies of the United Nations that have participated in the transition process leading to the creation of MICAH. We also thank Mr. Julian Harston for the professionalism he showed as the Representative of the Secretary-General, and we welcome his successor, Mr. Alfredo Lopes Cabral, and offer him our full support for the fulfilment of his tasks.

We feel that the work done by Ambassador Michel Duval, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada, deserves special mention. During the most difficult phase he assiduously promoted the establishment of this new Mission, which will ensure the continued presence of the United Nations in Haiti.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

As a member of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General, we would simply like to note that we are pleased that the General Assembly will be adopting this draft resolution and establishing the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH). France is particularly encouraged by the active involvement of the Haitian authorities in the preparation and negotiation of this draft resolution. We have no doubt that this commitment, which should be noted and supported, will allow swift progress to be made in the three proposed areas of cooperation: police, justice and human rights. It will also, we believe, help democracy take root in Haiti.

As it has done in the past, France intends to continue supporting the work of the United Nations in Haiti, particularly that of the new Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alfredo Lopes Cabral. We truly hope that there will be fully coordinated and integrated action by the United Nations to support the development of Haiti. This action must be carried out in full cooperation with the national authorities and in conjunction with the other international actors. We think that the Representative of the Secretary-General has an essential role to play here.

We hope that MICAH's achievements will be commensurate with the objectives we are setting for it, and that MICAH will be given all the resources it needs. We would have preferred the Mission to be fully financed from the regular budget and thus to depend less on the goodwill of a few external partners. However, we welcome the proposals made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee, which we think will help, fortunately, to limit any risk of slippage here. We naturally hope that all voluntary contributions will be paid with respect for the independence, neutrality and multilateral nature of MICAH.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution that the General Assembly has before it represents both the end of a cycle of activities in which our Organization has been engaged in support of Haiti and the beginning of another process. With the Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH) and the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) reaching the end of their mandates and with the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) about to get under way by means of this draft resolution, the Organization will have concluded a stage of peacekeeping and of restoring democratic freedoms and will begin a process of support for the consolidation of civil peace, of the strengthening of institutions that nurture democracy and human rights, and of support for economic development.

Venezuela welcomes this transition and trusts that the objectives and mandates of the new Mission will have the broadest backing of the international community. Particular mention needs to be made of the Haitian authorities and of Haitian society as a whole. As President Préval's letter suggests, in the final analysis it is they who have come to accept international assistance as a means of support as they seek to resolve the difficulties originating in political situations that today, fortunately, have been overcome. They have agreed to an ongoing effort to also be able to overcome the negative consequences of these situations in fields that are critical to the stability and development of their country.

As a participating member of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Haiti since the initiation of the process, Venezuela is pleased to support the Government and the people of Haiti in their efforts to fully recover the best of their traditions of freedom. In a fraternal spirit we call on them to persevere on the always challenging road towards the full and continuous exercise of democratic freedoms, towards the revitalization of their democratic institutions, and towards full economic and social development.

MICAH's priority areas of activity should focus the international community's efforts on these objectives. At the same time, the draft resolution envisages mechanisms for continuing to ensure the coherence of these efforts, in particular as regards assistance for development. This is part of the important contribution made by the Economic and Social Council.

In this way we are certain that the elements most necessary for the consolidation of democracy — human rights, social peace and development — will be successfully engaged.

For all these reasons, and associating ourselves with the comments made by the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Venezuela believes that this draft resolution establishing MICAH deserves the General Assembly's unanimous support.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.36, entitled "International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/54/L.36 was adopted (resolution 54/193).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 96

Question of East Timor (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/654)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.73)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.73.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Indonesia is deeply gratified to be sponsoring, along with Portugal, draft resolution A/54/L.73, on agenda item 96, entitled "Question of East Timor". We are profoundly heartened by the untiring endeavours of all parties in attaining our common goal. Notwithstanding the formidable obstacles and the many challenges, we have been steadfast in our commitment to reaching a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor, under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

It was that unswerving commitment and sincerity that facilitated agreement between the United Nations, Indonesia and Portugal with the signing of the 5 May 1999 New York Agreement. The effective implementation of that Agreement led to the popular consultation of the East Timorese people on 30 August 1999, in which more than 90 per cent participated in direct, democratic balloting organized and supervised by the United Nations.

In line with its resolve, the Indonesian Government abided by its responsibility and commitment to see to it that the choice made by the East Timorese was respected, and that their separation from Indonesia was carried out in an orderly, peaceful and dignified manner. In that regard, it is pertinent to note that the Indonesian armed forces and police personnel began to withdraw from East Timor following the Security Council's establishment of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET), and the deployment of the Force on 20 September 1999.

Subsequently, the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly, in line with article 6 of the Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Portugal on the question of East Timor, took the constitutional step of formally adopting decision 5/MPR/1999 on 20 October 1999 concerning the popular consultation in East Timor. By that constitutional act, Indonesia's solemn responsibility to East Timor, which began 24 years ago, was brought to a close. Today, East Timor has begun a process of transition under the authority of the United Nations towards eventual independence.

It is therefore both timely and appropriate for the General Assembly to close its consideration of this question and to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session a new item entitled "The situation in East Timor during its transition to independence". That would be an auspicious beginning for the people of East Timor as they face not only a new era in their lives, but also, along with the rest of the world, a new millennium.

The adoption of this draft resolution would open a new chapter in the lives of the East Timorese people at this important juncture, as they embark on the work of nation-building. We therefore commend draft resolution A/54/L.73 to the General Assembly for adoption by consensus, especially because the draft resolution is the product of sustained efforts between Indonesia and Portugal, in conjunction with close consultations with the Secretariat.

I wish in conclusion to express our sincere appreciation to all those who have worked tirelessly to bring to an end the question of East Timor. Our thanks go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the two previous Secretaries-General, for the holding of the tripartite dialogue with Indonesia and Portugal. Particular thanks go also to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General on the question of East Timor, Mr. Jamsheed Marker.

The Acting President: I call now on the representative of Portugal, also to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.73.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): The draft resolution before us on the question of East Timor (A/54/L.73) represents a milestone not only for East Timor but also for the United Nations: for East Timor because after 3 years the East Timorese people have finally been able to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination and

independence, and for the United Nations because, thanks to the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his representatives, Mr. Jamsheed Marker and Mr. Ian Martin, a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor has been found — a solution, I should say, that many felt it would be impossible to achieve.

Indonesia and Portugal can also express their satisfaction today for having been able, through a negotiating process, to sign the 5 May Agreement and, through the work towards its implementation, to allow the East Timorese to exercise the right to self-determination. Despite the difficulties this process faced, the key development to note and welcome is that, through their massive participation in the popular consultation, the people of East Timor were able to choose their future freely and to begin building their own country, which may well be the first to join this Organization as a new Member in the new millennium.

The draft resolution before us emerged from the joint efforts of Indonesia and Portugal, in close consultation with the Secretariat, as was just underlined by my Indonesian colleague. Indonesia and Portugal have co-sponsored it and are jointly introducing it to the General Assembly today. The draft resolution opens a new phase for East Timor, which this Assembly will have a particular responsibility to follow: the transition of the Territory to independence. We urge the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus of this plenary.

The United Nations, through its Transitional Administration, is now faced with the immense task of leading East Timor to independence. The successful conclusion of this process will continue to depend fully on the engagement and commitment of the international community as a whole. The challenges ahead are considerable, but we are certain that the United Nations will be able to implement successfully its mandate in East Timor. The support of the international community for the reconstruction and transition to independence of East Timor will be fundamental. we must create the conditions for East Timor to be a success story: internal success, with democratic institutions and the rule of law, in which all Timorese without exception can find their place and benefit from the sustainable development of the country; and also external success, conducive to full regional integration and the establishment of relationships of close cooperation and friendship with neighbouring countries.

The Portuguese delegation would like to pay tribute to all those who have made this day possible, above all, of course, the East Timorese people themselves. Portugal is very grateful to the Secretary-General, his representatives and others who promoted and facilitated dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia.

We end with a word of deep appreciation to the United Nations staff who, under very difficult conditions, have been working hard to implement the mandate of the United Nations to bring a new dawn to East Timor.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.73.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/54/L.73 was adopted (resolution 54/194).

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides to conclude its consideration of agenda item 96?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 162

Observer status for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in the General Assembly

Draft resolution (A/54/L.7/Rev.2)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Ecuador to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is one of the international bodies that were established after the Second World War — in 1948, to be precise — and emerged from a conference convened by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The legal norms governing the work of this organization have been updated over time and now constitute an international agreement that, in accordance with

paragraph 1 (a) of article 2 of the Convention on the Law of Treaties, fulfils the definition of a treaty.

The IUCN is unlike any other body, entity or organization and is therefore a *sui generis* case, unique in its composition. However, its 75 member States from Africa, Latin America, North America, Asia, Oceania, Eastern Europe and Western Europe, which are also Members of the United Nations, certainly consider the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources to be an intergovernmental body. These 75 members are ultimately responsible for all the decisions adopted by the organization.

The IUCN can make a positive contribution to the General Assembly's work through the information and constructive commentary provided by its experts and through its valuable experience in areas of particular interest to our Organization: peace, the world order and the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources. Through its Commission on Environmental Law, the IUCN and its member States were able to draft a code of conduct for transnational parks and published, at the request of the Secretary-General, a United Nations list of national parks and protected areas. They also helped to establish and administer parks for peace in disputed border areas.

As to questions of the world order, the IUCN made an important contribution to the preparation of part XII of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. If, however, there were one element in particular that deserved to be stressed, it would be the pioneering contribution of the IUCN to establishing the concept of sustainable development and its subsequent application through relevant projects and policies.

At present, the IUCN is working in over 139 nations and has formal agreements of cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other specialized agencies of the United Nations, as well as the World Bank.

At the World Congress for the Conservation of Nature, held in Montreal, Canada, in 1996, the member States of the IUCN instructed their Council to consider ways in which they could cooperate further with the United Nations. In April 1998, the IUCN Council decided to propose to the General Assembly that it be granted observer status. In October of the same year, at its fifty-third session, the General Assembly considere conclusion of an additional item on the granti observer status to the IUCN. Consideration of tha was postponed to the fifty-fourth session.

At this session, the Assembly's General Com included this item on the agenda, to be conside plenary. On 8 October, a few minutes before the resolution was to be adopted, the Secretariat inform that certain members of the General Assembly wis comment on the draft.

From then until the end of last week, the spo were involved in a lengthy negotiating proces culminated in the draft before us.

To be frank, I have to say that the solutio reached is not the best one. However, it is an agree that will accord the IUCN status within the U Nations, since that body, having been granted obs status in the General Assembly, relinquished in 1999 its status as a consultative body withi Economic and Social Council. In addition, it estab procedure for the future. That procedure will preve plenary from becoming involved in intermi discussions, as was the case this year, and ensur interested organizations and countries have a foru present their arguments in favour of intergovernm organizations that wish to be admitted as observers General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to express my de gratitude to the sponsoring States for their val cooperation, generosity and understanding, which it possible to find a solution to the problem. I would like to thank the delegations of the other countries in one way or another, made possible the introdu today, at long last, on behalf on all the sponsors — w now include Japan and Luxembourg — of the resolution contained in document A/54/L.7/Rev.2. I that this draft will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have the honour to spea behalf of the European Union on the question of obs status for the International Union for the Conservatio Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The Central Eastern European countries associated with the Euro Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Esto Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slov and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Associa

country member of the European Economic Area Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is very supportive of the work of the IUCN, also known as the World Conservation Union, which is one of the world's oldest transnational organizations dedicated to promoting and conserving the equitable use of natural resources. The tasks and the main objectives of the IUCN usefully support and complement the work done under the auspices of the United Nations to promote conservation of the integrity and diversity of nature through the equitable and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

The manifold activities of the IUCN include taking measures to save endangered species, working with communities to achieve sustainable development, creating natural parks and other protected areas, and assessing the status of ecosystems. The IUCN serves as one of the main technical advisors to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has considerable experience and expertise in providing environmental education. Inviting the IUCN to participate in the General Assembly in the capacity of observer will facilitate cooperation between the United Nations and the IUCN in numerous fields of common interest and will thereby contribute greatly to the work of the Organization. The European Union fully supports the proposed draft resolution.

The European Union is aware of legal concerns related to the *sui generis* structure provided for by the statute of the IUCN. While the World Conservation Union plays an important role in the field of the conservation of nature and natural resources that is relevant to the work of the General Assembly — and that needs to be recognized — the criteria laid down in decision 49/426 for the granting of observer status in the General Assembly remain valid.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2?

Draft resolution A/54/L.7/Rev.2 was adopted (resolution 54/195).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Bergeron (United States of America): I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my country's unwavering support for the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. We fully support its observer status in the General Assembly and believe the General Assembly took an appropriate decision today.

I would be remiss, however, if I failed to make clear my country's opposition to the way in which the procedural amendments present in this resolution appeared. We would have been prepared to consider them in a separate draft resolution addressing the substantive issues implicit in these elements. Our opposition to the nature of their inclusion was the reason why my delegation withdrew its co-sponsorship of this resolution.

In closing, I would like to welcome IUCN to the General Assembly. We look forward to its participation in our work in the years to come.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

In accordance with the resolution just adopted, I now call on the observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Bhagwat-Singh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): On behalf of the President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), Ms. Yolanda Kakabadse, Minister of the Environment of Ecuador, and on behalf of the Director General of IUCN, Ms. Maritta Koch-Weser, I would like to thank the General Assembly for the resolution which has just been adopted regarding observer status for the IUCN in the General Assembly.

The IUCN is grateful to the delegations of the Dominican Republic and Ecuador for submitting this item to the General Assembly one year ago, during the fiftieth-anniversary year of the establishment of the IUCN. May I also express our sincere appreciation to the

Member States that sponsored this resolution for their support and confidence in the work of the IUCN.

Fifty years ago the idea of sustainable development existed, but it had not yet found a voice in the policy of international organizations. The French Republic and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, along with several other States, government ministries concerned with nature and expert scientific and professional associations, established what is today the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources at Fontainebleau. The IUCN's 75 States members have built a strong programme for sustainability.

We must acknowledge our debt today to many officials and experts who have laboured at the IUCN's general assemblies and World Conservation Congresses and on the IUCN's Council; to the Swiss Confederation, which was one of the founding members of the IUCN and is the State where the IUCN has its present headquarters; to the IUCN's expert commissions and the current Director General and her predecessors. Thanks to their foresight and hard work, since 1962 the IUCN has been and remains the authority responsible for preparing the Secretary-General's list of protected areas, for providing expert services for conventions and for providing expertise for sustainable development in all the regions of the world.

The IUCN's Parks for Peace programme helps promote friendly relations among neighbouring States through the common stewardship of parks along their borders. There are more than 75 such parks in the work today. The IUCN pioneered the concept of sustainable development in its world conservation strategy, which it launched in 1980.

Today the IUCN has 43 offices throughout the world. The IUCN will be privileged to provide its expert analysis and research on items before the General Assembly and to fully cooperate in the work of the General Assembly in its various activities. Recently, for instance, here at Headquarters, the IUCN, in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations University, conducted a workshop on international environmental law.

The IUCN is honoured and pleased to accept the invitation to participate as an observer in the work of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 162?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.